

## Second-Degree Burns

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## Second-Degree Burns

by [FutureHeart](#)

### Summary

Nick wakes up to sobbing. Long story short, it was a rough morning.

### Notes

I really shouldn't have to say this but this is harmless, self-indulgent fun! So don't take it too seriously and I hope you enjoy the read. I worked really hard on it :)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Nick woke up to sobbing. There was a long moment of him laying half awake while his brain revved back to life. While he blinked away the tiredness, he started to notice that the bed seemed short the weight of one person- someone had left. Suddenly he understood what had woke him up.

He shot straight up in bed. Something was very wrong. George softly snored beside him, oblivious. As much as he absolutely hated waking up his boyfriends, this was important. He hesitantly jostled the other boy's shoulder. "George, wake up, something's- " A metallic crash and another strangled cry from somewhere downstairs jolted both of them wide awake.

After flinching at the sound, George quickly propped himself up on his elbow. Still wiping the sleep off his face, he mumbled. “Where’s Clay?” The two shared a worried, blurry look. The crying continued. It clicked.

They were out of bed in an instant. With both of them in a frenzy, the doorway and stairs proved difficult to bypass without injury. Minor mishaps and panic aside, they *had* to find Clay. Now.

It was when the two skidded around the corner into the kitchen that they saw it. Their boyfriend, sitting on the floor and bawling his eyes out. His face was stained red, tears were just streaming right down his cheeks. For a brief second, all they could do was watch him shake with every sob. The sight was just... heartbreaking.

Nick cringed. The boy’s hands trembled in front of him, his fingertips were painted crimson while his palms were singed white. The room was warm with steam, sparkling hot water coated the floor. Not good, not good, not good at all.

In a second flat, George was on his knees and gently holding his trembling wrists. So audibly anxious, he pleaded “Sweetheart, what happened?” It was obvious what had happened, he still felt the need to ask. Clay tried to pull away, tried to curl in on himself and shut all sensory input *out*. His hands, his head, his chest, everything hurt. Despite the crying and tugging, George held firm.

He had woken everyone up. His hands stung, and so did his eyes, but he had woken everyone up, and that was so much worse.

George didn’t know what to do. His boyfriend was sobbing on the kitchen floor, what was he *supposed* to do? A hand came down on his shoulder. “Here,” Now Nick was leaning close beside him, a tense smile on his face. His voice was quiet. “Go clean up, I’ve got him.” George cast one more sorrow glance back before letting Nick take his place.

“Hey, it’s okay.” Nick was patient, and he didn’t get frustrated when Clay started shaking his head. He tried again, this time with his hands resting in the wounded boy’s lap. “Yes, it *is* okay. Let us help, alright?” He tried to ignore it- the sound of his boyfriend choking on his worn down throat. He tried to ignore it and focus on helping instead.

Eventually he was able to wrap his hands around the boy’s wrists without protest. Slowly but surely, the two got back on their feet. As soon as they did, Nick abruptly found himself caught in an awkward sort of hug.

Clay had draped his arms around the boy's shoulders as best he could while keeping his far away from any kind of touch. He was still whimpering, still wheezing, and still way too overwhelmed. Nick could feel Clay's chest shuddering. This was torture. He hugged back, trying not to squeeze too hard.

They were both standing up, so at least some progress had been made. While that thought was somewhat comforting, the boy's hands were still scorched. Nick couldn't help but grimace, he didn't *know* how to treat a burn...why didn't he pay more attention in health class? He hesitated pulling away, but ultimately decided that the physical safety of his boyfriend was a bit more important than emotional support. Even if Clay was now staring down at him, looking just about ready to fall apart all over again.

"Uhm, let's go sit down, alright?" A solemn sniff was all he got. Nick squirmed underneath his misery flavored gaze. He bit his cheek and muttered a quick "Good enough," mostly for his own peace of mind. Immediately, he ushered towards the kitchen table. Wood screamed against the tile as he dragged out a chair.

A few timid steps later, Clay flopped down in his seat. Although he had quieted down, he was obviously no less upset. Nick shifted on his feet. Okay, Clay liked seeing people happy, he knew this much. If Clay saw someone worrying, he'd worry too. It was one of his most endearing qualities, he just hoped it still worked under the current circumstances.

Lowering himself to his knees left him level with his boyfriend's tear-stained face. Somehow, he managed to suppress his concern in favor of flashing a reassuring grin. "Hey!" It felt *wrong* to be smiling. Clay's breaths were heavy and uneven, his face was all shades of red, his hands were singed, and Nick was smiling. Keep it together. "We're gonna get your hands fixed up. Sounds good, right?"

A moment passed, filled with nothing but the sound of towels sweeping the floor. Then Clay started nodding. Nick almost deflated in relief, they were getting somewhere. He set his hands on the injured boy's knees and started pushing himself back to his feet. "Alright, I'm gonna go get some stuff to—" Mid-way through standing back up, elbows came down on his hands. His heart skipped a beat as he somewhat stumbled back down to his knees. Nick huffed. "Yes?"

The low-pitched whimper that Clay gave, it only made him feel worse. He didn't need to hear the words, Nick got the message just fine. Disappointed, pleading, upset eyes begging him *please don't go*.

Internal conflict made his head spin. He wanted to do something more than sit pretty. At the same time, Clay's elbows pressed on his knuckles. How could he leave? Except, *duh*, he didn't have to. There were three of them.

Knowing what he was about to ask made his cheeks flush. He brushed his thumb over the hem of Clay's jeans. "George?" A squeak of acknowledgement, a short hum of curiosity. The british boy's stare was blank. Nick sighed, this was just pathetic. "Can you...look up how to treat a uh, hot water burn?"

To be completely honest, George didn't look any more well prepared than he was. "Yeah, just let me get my phone, it's upstairs." The boy threw one last towel onto the tile and pulled it flat with a foot before speeding around the corner and out of the kitchen.

For the first time, Nick took a moment to assess the damage. The air was still fogged up with steam, every breath made his nose and lungs warm. A limited array of pots and pans sat in a heap on the counter. As he slowly shifted his gaze down, he couldn't help but hold a little tighter- Because it almost hurt just *looking* at Clay's fingers. It was all just ugly shades of pink, and splotches of red that looked like blood rushing underneath his skin. Hysteria was still on his face with the way his bottom lip trembled. Pale palms, puffed up eyes, not a pretty sight.

Nick took his time adjusting positions until he had his hands gently cupped around Clay's face. "Love, what happened?" Green eyes stared back at him, dim and gloomy.

The next breath that Clay took shook like an earthquake would LA. "I just..." His voice was undeniably raspy, all sorts of unsteady. "I wanted to make you guys breakfast."

Ouch. He should have figured that was the case, but still. Ouch. It felt like Nick swallowed a pity-guilt-cocktail, and now his stomach felt sour. Clay wanted to make them *breakfast*, the sweetheart. Sitting impatiently on his tongue were apologies, kisses, and all the soothing words in the world. The urge to collapse in a puddle of comfort was overwhelming. Unbearably enticing. His brain wanted nothing more than to break down in sympathy and smother everything with unhelpful affection.

He shouldn't. In situations like this, Clay was an emotional mirror. *Suck it up, dude. Don't make him upset.* Alright, new goal: Keep it calm.

Nick swiped away another one of his boyfriend's tears before peering back at the kitchen casualties. He couldn't help but wonder. "Hey," The pained expression on Clay's face quickly turned expectant. In the most casual tone that he could muster, Nick cocked his head and asked, "What were you gonna make us?"

The air hissed around them. Clay looked down at his hands. After that, the stove. Then he locked eyes with Nick's again. His face became unreadable somewhere along the way. "Pancakes...and bacon." If Nick were to guess, it was grease that did his boyfriend in. Tragic.

But he couldn't help but raise an eyebrow. The smell of food was faint, and there was almost no trace of ingredients in sight. Unshelved plates and utensils, they were suspiciously absent. Nick shook his head with a snicker. "Doesn't look like you got very far," He teased.

What started out as a wheeze swiftly degraded into a coughing fit. In hindsight, humor might not have been the *best* route to cheer up someone who had just previously cried away the lining of their throat- but it worked nonetheless! Clay's feet drummed the floor in delight as he pulled his elbows close to his side. He always did that when he laughed, an adorable idiosyncrasy.

Just as Nick began running a hand through damp and dirty blonde hair, another pair of feet came bounding down the stairs. With it came a subtly panicked voice, "Okay so it says we should run his hands under cool water, not cold, for about 20 minutes." Eyes still on his phone, George carelessly caught his shoulder on the doorway with a thud. "Ow- uh, it also says we should go to the hospital. Just in case." Nick twisted around, a frown quickly forming. That's definitely not what he wanted to hear.

He only noticed that he'd been grinding his teeth when it started giving him a headache. While he himself felt sick with concern, George looked completely lost. With a sharp inhale, Nick did his best to mouth out "Will the water hurt?" It was hard to tell if the message got across or not, because all he got was an overly-bewildered shrug.

"Alright..." His voice held an undertone of dejection, almost defeated. Nick finally rose to his feet, making sure to keep a hand on Clay for solace's sake. "That's what we'll do. We'll go to the sink, yeah?" Green eyes stared up at him, afraid, vaguely betrayed. He tried to ignore it. A lack of protest would have to suffice.

It hurt walking away, it really did. But readying the sink seemed a little more appealing, even if it granted him only a moment of peace. Behind him: hushed words of encouragement, the sound of wood against ceramics, and slightly staggered footsteps. Cool, but not cold. He shook the water off his hand.

Three pairs of arms soon rested on the rim of the sink. A severely restless vibe buzzed between them. Seeing how Clay had himself hunched over with his hands hovering, wobbling above the water, something in Nick's head told him yes. This would in fact *hurt*. The morning was really off to a wonderful start.

Both Nick and George leaned so that they could share a look behind their boyfriend's back. A look that said a lot. One that said '*Do we really have to do this?*', and '*I don't want to hurt him on purpose...*' alongside a million '*What if?*' questions. Nick swallowed hard. Excuses sat in his mouth like lead. Set the timer, see if they had any gauze, go find his keys first. In the end, all they would do was postpone the pain- which was arguably worse.

With a deep exhale, Nick forced the words out of his mouth. He went ahead and took a hold of the injured boy's forearm. "It'll be alright, we just need to get you all cleaned up." Except this is when Clay decided that he was no longer on board with this whole 'having his burns be treated' thing. He definitely made a valiant effort to tear himself away, but weakened and outnumbered, his boyfriends swiftly overwhelmed him.

"Sweetheart, let's just get this over with." Nick so badly wanted to cover his ears. The running water couldn't quite drown out the sound of Clay hissing in pain. In an instant, the boy jerked his hands out of the water and was trying to wriggle his way back to the kitchen floor. Teeth grit, hearts already broken, Nick and George reluctantly pulled his hands back under the water. Twenty minutes of this? He didn't even know what to think.

Five minutes in, and Clay was crying again. Crying, stuttering, muttering, tearfully giggling his way through the pain. Both other boys took their turns pointlessly gushing apologies and anything heartening that came to their heads. Everything went understandably unanswered. At some point, Clay had downgraded to shaking his head and shuddering, caught in an endless loop of flinching and twitching. While George's chin lay resting on a harshly shaking shoulder, Nick decided it was time to pull something he for sure would consider a pro gamer move.

Things almost fell apart the second he stepped away. Taking his hands off Clay's back alone earned him a metric ton of disapproval. Clay's face whipped around to face him, blotchy, confused, every shade of frustrated. George on the other hand looked helpless beyond recognition. Looked dizzy with uncertainty. They didn't want him to *go* but...

Nick held up a finger, silently saying '*One sec*', before stalking away towards the living room. Despite every event that had occurred in this train wreck of a morning, they still had a failsafe. Something he knew would help (it always did).

Luckily it was right there on the couch. Sitting innocently with her limbs neatly folded under her, Patches. Wide green eyes stared up at him, blissfully unaware of all his human struggles. Her tail swished and curled behind her. Clay *loved* Patches. A lot. Every piece of bad news, every distressing thought, every failed recording ended with her in Clay's arms. She didn't seem to mind.

After scooping her up to his chest, Nick couldn't help but plant a quick kiss on her forehead before

carrying her back to the sink. It was impossible not to, she was invitingly soft. Adorable. Admittedly very huggable. And smart, too, considering that at the sight of her favorite person crying, Patches immediately began to wiggle out of Nick's hold. He let her hop onto the countertop and watched her trot up to Clay's face. She leaned far over the water, just to be closer.

Green eyes- they matched. They matched, both pairs of green lit up like sunshine would the day. Even when Clay went briefly silent, the water kept on running. "P-Patches!" Cool, just not cold.

Patches licked her nose, the white on her chest bristling. Both Nick and George carefully wrapped a hand around their boyfriend's waist. One last sniff of precaution, and Patches rammed her forehead right into Clay's face. She twisted and rubbed her ears against his cheeks before settling down on the edge of the sink.

For once, the sound of water was drowned out, and ellated giggling took its place. "Thank you for the bonk, Patches."

### ***Second-Degree Burns***

#### **End Notes**

I almost gave up on this 100 times, a bunch of those being in the last hour of it's making. But it's finally done and I'm honestly super happy with how it came out! Please let me know what you think in the comments :)  
Stay cool ~Kenna

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!